

EN CONSOLABLES; OR

THE
OR THE

Contented Cuckold.

DRAMATICK FARCE

BY MR. DUNKEE

IN THREE ACTS

Anonymus.

For Love the Miser will his Gold despise,
The False young Fair-fair, or the foolish wife;
Cautious the Young, and Complaisant the Old;
The Cruel Gentle, and the Coward Bold.

BIRMINGHAM.



LONDON:

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Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

Lord Symon, Lord of the Manor.

Sir Solomon Swag, the Inconsoleable.

Baron Belchwell, }
Baron Scoopall, } Two Consolators.

'Squire Flyblow, a Creature of *Swag's*, and a
Pretender to *Meritoria*.

Freeman, a young Gentleman of a fine Estate
and Parts, in Love with *Meritoria*.

Boldman, his Friend, a Free Speaker.

Crimp, Servant to *Flyblow*.

Tom, Servant to *Freeman*.

W O M E N.

Lady Belchwell, the comfortable Lady, or
Doctress.

Meritoria, Niece to Sir *Solomon*.

Jenny, her Maid.

Visiting Ladies,



T H E



EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

TO THE

Hon. Geo. Q----, Esq.



ERMIT me, SIR, to lay upon your Bureau, in Print, what was intended for your Diversion, in Manuscript. Had it reach'd your Eyes in that Dishabileé, it had obviated the Importunity of his Friends in this other; and remain'd, as it was originally design'd, at your Disposal, in Concert with that Right Honourable Person it was first left with. Consolation is a Tribute due by Custom to the Inconsolable: But where Grimace and Pretence usurp upon the Purlieus of Sincerity and Virtue, it will be deem'd, pardonable sure, for Satire to start out of his Sylvan Shades, and play his Part on the open Stage of Life, in a green Lawn, since deny'd the Decorations of a Theatre. That your conspicuous Virtue may be Rewarded, as generally, and generously, as it is Applauded, is the sincere Wish of

Your HONOUR'S

Most Obedient

and Most Humble Servant,

The AUTHOR,

PROLOGUE.

TO all the LIMBERHAMS of this bright Age,
Our Author recommends each following Page.
Regard them not as the meer Fruits of Spight ;
Since he avers them undisputed Right.
This Mirrour is not more the Beau's Demesne,
Than the kind Keeper's every following Scene.

Once Britain's greatest Poet led the Way :
No finis'd Piece, but a confess'd Essay.
For while he took the Pourtrairture upon him ;
The Lines were all so gross, that none would own him.

Their Follies while we lash, we own their Sense ;
If then they laugh, 'tis at their own Expence :
Since while in Sense's Trappings they would spark it,
Like modern Statesmen, they beat down the Market.
Virgins debauch'd, and marry'd Ladies sharing,
They'll find the Cap is of their own preparing.
Then sure our Author can have no wrong Meaning,
To clap it on their Heads without a cleaning :
The Diamond-Band won't make the Cap look bigger :
For Glasses change not Substance, but the Figure.

To all who pick out like egregious Patterns,
Our Author, far from envying them their Slatterns,
With due Submission, candidly implores,
They'd use their Country, as they use their Wh— ;
Whom, after Prostitutes to sordid Uses,
They dress up fine, to palliate past Abuses.



THE
INCONSOLEABLES:
OR, THE
Contented CUCKOLD, &c.

S C E N E, a large Square. Lord Symon's House
on one Side: Sir Solomon Swag's on the other.

Enter Boldman in the Square; and, after a Turn or
two, speaks.

Bol.  O W weak a Creature art thou,
Man? With all thy boasted Reason at thy Heels; the very't Reptile upon Earth acts more consistently. Presuming on thy Knowledge, hence giv'st a loose to every

Lust and Passion, while Reason, light as a Feather, as on some gentle Rill floats down to serve 'em all. The Reptile, steady to the Institutes of Nature, ne'er goes astray to pleasure pamper'd Appetite; but born a Reptile, preserves its Character as long as Life

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subsists, leaving behind it Seeds of a like future Progeny. Senseless as *Man* indeed, it throws away no Care of great Futurity, and Reason good : For where's the Man could e'er reproach it with the Abuse of rational Faculties? What Nature never gave, ne'er could be us'd ; and therefore not abus'd. But *Man* entrust'd, or, as he says, endowed with Wisdom, Reason, and Understanding, acts retrograde to all and every one of these bright Excellencies. To the first he quits all Shadow of Pretence by the Slights he puts upon the Dictates of the Second ; while the Third disdains to be a *Mediator* in a Contest too scandalous for common Sense to countenance. Such are thy awkward Boasts, *O Man!* And such the awkward Issue—I wish *Freeman* would come to ease my Head of these uncomfortable *Meditations*.—But how whimsical is Fortune? I ask'd for a convertible Creature, and she has supply'd his Place with a *Flyblow*.

Enter Flyblow.

Fly. Your Servant Mr. *Boldman*, your Servant. I rejoice to find you in this Place ; for I don't apprehend but the common Calamity has drawn you hither. You are come to condole with one Pair of *Inconsoleables*. It is vastly charitable : They hang their Heads like any Pair of *Poppies*.

Bold. As you say, *Flyblow*, those Poppies are a comical sort of Vegetable : I can hardly deign to place 'em in the List of Flow'rs : And yet they glitter and look bright in the Morning, but shed their Finery before the Approach of Night ; when indeed we see 'em everlastingly inconsolable.

Fly. I am glad that my Simile meets with the Approbation of a Man of Sense : I love to talk intelligently, Mr. *Boldman*. But come, what do we wait for? Why don't you enter.

Bold. Truly I wait for my Friend *Freeman*, who appointed me to meet him in this Place. *Fly.*

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Fly. Will he be here too? That's kind, extreamly kind. Tho' indeed the Occasion calls for it all. My dear Lord Symon's Loss was singularly vast. An excellent Lady; lov'd far and near. It is thought, if she had liv'd a Year or two longer among 'em, the Country People would have rais'd up Monuments to her before she dy'd. Judge you then what such a Loss must be to the Owner? Poor Gentleman! My Lord was so inexpressibly affected, that he went to make a Speech to some that came to condole with him, and the Words stuck fast in his Teeth, and could neither be got backward nor forward, 'till a *Spaniard* in Company pull'd out a* *Visneger*, and set him at Liberty.

Bold. Don't you think this was very kindly done of the *Spaniard*?

Fly. I must tell you there was no Kindness lost; for he had done the *Spaniard* good Turns enough before to deserve more than that came to.

Bold. Nay, then you answer all at once: For Gratitude will be a Virtue when all the rest go a begging. And if Lord Symon's Lady was a Person of such endearing Accomplishments, doubtless, he will take Care by the Respect he pays to her Memory, to convince his Neighbours, that their Sorrow and Lamentations are but proper Oblations, and of a Piece with his own.

Fly. Dear Mr. Boldman, between you and I, the Fears of his Friends lie quite another Way.

Bold. How? Do they imagine, that he will come short in an Example of true Tenderness?

Fly. You quite mistake me still: Their Fears are full the reverse. They are afraid he will set such an Example as no good Christian ought to follow. It was a huge while before he could be got to eat or drink any Thing. Sir Solomon Swag and I lay'd our Heads

. In this case I ac^{ting} on o^r own w^{is}e
and of course agree with the world they come w^{is}h to

* *Visneger*, is the Tooth-pick which the Spaniards use after Dinner.

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together over and over, plotting and contriving how we might deceive his Sorrows. But all in vain: He remain'd Inconsoleable—

Bold. But I hope you got him to eat at last—

Fly. Truly it was as much as ever we could do—

Bold. And to drink too?

Fly. With Difficulty enough, I do assure you. But just as we had brought Matters to bear, poor Sir *Solomon*, my Compeer and Assistant, was visited with just such another feeling Instance of Mortality in his own Family; that from a Consolator and Adviser, reduced him to a Condition that render'd all Advice, however necessary, equally unavailable: He lost his dear Lady too.

Bold. And what was Sir *Solomon's* dear Lady equally deplorable?

Fly. Doubtless to him she was so: Since he took on and cry'd like a Child. I protest he often puts me in Mind of the *Ephesian* Matron. And indeed his Neighbour, my *Lord*, seems to sympathize with him, as he had before done with my *Lord*.

Bold. Then I am afraid we shall furnish the World with a pair of *Ephesian* Matrons of the Male Kind. A shining Treasure!

Fly. Not so. I hope by my Advice and Means, to preserve 'em to the World a little longer; which, if I accomplish, I think I shall richly deserve Sir *Solomon's* Niece *Meritoria*, notwithstanding her great Stock of Beauty and Fortune.

Bold. O, then I find you are one of *Love's* Proselytes.

Fly. The pretty Rogue was won't now and then to cast one of her charming Eyes upon me. Tho' o'my Conscience, I must needs say, that since the Night her Uncle spoke a good Word for me, she has not been altogether so coming as I us'd to think her.

Bold. Women, you know, don't always choose to follow Direction.

Fly. I am afraid my Friend there is some bold *Trojan*

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jan that lays private Siege to her: Tho' when he has doubled the Term of Troy, I —

Bold. Why do you think so?

Fly. I saw a Letter in her Woman's Hand, and tax'd her with it; nay offer'd Money; (for I hold that the Key of every Lock) but she would not listen.

Bold. What could she pretend?

Fly. That it was from a Sweetheart of her own; and no Body (she said) should pry into her Secrets, nor have any Thing to do with them. After a deal of *Pro* and *Con* I offer'd Ten Guineas only for a Sight of the *Superscription*; and do you believe the Baggage would be attentive?

Bold. I can do your Busines there: I know the Girl. She liv'd with a Relation of mine—

Fly. And will you befriend me? Will you use your Interest for a Discovery?

Bold. if there be any Thing in it, I will soon find it out.

Fly. Dear Friend, that will be acting the friendly Part indeed. But who have we here? O, I see; I know 'em.— They are two that this Melancholy Occasion has fetch't from foreign Parts. In their native Country they are as great as Lairds in *Scotland*. I have seen 'em often at Sir *Solomon's*: What they are upon, Time must produce: However, to ripen Matters—

Bold. As Boys ripen Apples, by laying them together in a Heap 'till they rot.

Fly. Very Right,---Ha ha ha---very right — With your Leave I will join Company with them, and introduce myself, by introducing them — with you. Pardon the Abrupton—

Bold. O, Sir, no Apology—

Fly. Or will you let us have the Honour of your Society?

Bold. I cannot do my self the Honour for the Reason I gave you—

Fly. But will you remember the Letter?

Bold.

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Bold. Assuredly—

Fly. Well then, dear Friend, adieu for the Present, We shall have you among us by and by: I know you are too good to let the Afflicted want your Consolation. I must hasten up to 'em, or they will get in before me. Adieu—

[Runs upto the two Barons, and after Compliment, enters into Lord Symon's with them.

Bold. Now has this Coxcomb set me ten Times more agog for the Appearance of Freeman. What should make him stay? If he knew the Discoveries I have made, Meritoria's Charms would hardly keep him. With Reason too; since this is Part of his Concern with Meritoria— O, here he comes at last. Well Freeman, what made you stay so long?

Enter Freeman.

Free. I beg Pardon, my dear Friend. But a little sort of a Tendency to a Wrangle detain'd me.

Bold. A Wrangle! With whom?

Free. Even with dearest Meritoria—

Bold. Not worth enquiring after I suppose. What was not your Letter according to Mathematical Decorum? Or did you stay one Minute and half a Second beyond your Appointment?

Free. You are quite out in both. But to put an End to all further Enquiries, you must know the Dispute was about my making a consolatory Visit to her pious Uncle.

Bold. Could that admit of a Dispute?

Free. Can you ask the Question? *Hec quantum mutatus*—

Bold. I'll answer you in your own Dialect --- *Tempora mutantur et nos*—

Free. What do you mean by that? *Quo* I

Bold. Did she tell you of a dangerous Rival?

Free. Not very dangerous: But she did intimate some-

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somewhat that Way ; and from thence urg'd her Reasons

Bold. To which you could find nothing to oppose but your Obstinacy.

Free. Prithee, why so severe upon thy Friend ?

Bold. Because, I am apt to think that Friend of mine will be forc'd to own he deserves no less. You say not dangerous ; I say the most dangerous of Rivals. His Interest is founded on Adulation. Nature has qualify'd him for it ; and there are some certain Creatures upon the Face of the Earth that will swallow as fast as others can disgorge. Do you understand me now ?

Free. And this is the Embassy you would send me upon ?

Bold. Under *Meritoria's* Commission, I question whether this accruing Age can tally it. I grant you the Man, the Matter, and the Occasion, to an ingenuous Temper, are all repugnant : But let me side with the Ladies so far ; the Lover that will refuse to wade Knee-deep in Ordure, in prosecution of his Passion, ought to be set on the blank Side of his Mistress's Kalendar.

Free. How do they correspond with your late Sentiments ?

Bold. Right well : For tho' we lay down general Maxims ; It is impossible for the wisest Man to lay down any so solid as not to admit of an Exception. This is true in all Occurrences of Life but in Love ; where Caprice or Humour too often predominate, either in Mistress or Parents, or disposing Relation ; a Man must be a very mean Politician, or a poor Lover that will boggle at a little Deviation to obtain his main End.

Free. These are new nostrums, Friend.

Bold. Not much short of the Creation : So long as I don't break in upon any Point of real Honour ; which when any Mistress commands, she will, she ought

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ought, so far, to discharge me of my valuable Sentiments. And to evince the Authority of my Precept by my Practice, in your Service; I have been guilty of a little more Equivocation than my natural Temper us'd to admit of.

Free. In what I pray?

Bold. I imagine your Rival had seen in honest *Jenny*'s Hands your last Letter to *Meritoria*: Jealousy stung him, and he would fain have seen it, and by the President of his Friend and Colleague, offer'd to come down for that Purpose. The Girl was honest and refus'd all his Offers: And upon his relation of these Facts, to prevent further Enquiries, which might have a dangerous Tendency, I undertook the Affair.

Free. What Affair?

Bold. To get a Sight of the Letter, and show it him.

Free. I don't suppose you intend to perform.

Bold. Indeed but I do—

Free. What? shew my Letter to the Wretch—

Bold. I never promis'd that. But a Letter he shall have, wrote by some body or other to *Jenny*, which will allay his Jealousy; and bury him in a Security that you may make your Account of. Does my Practice deviate from my Precepts?

Free. I could ask Ten Thousand Questions, but am so convinc'd by your Reasons, that I think the first Thing I ought to do, is to beg *Meritoria*'s Pardon, and assure her that I am impatient to obey her Commands. Will you excuse me so long?

Bold. If you can send *Jenny* hither in the mean Time, we shall concert what I told you of.

Free. I will; never fear it.

[*Exit to Sir Solomon's Door.*

Bold. Indeed, my Friend, I must agree with you, that it is an unknown Part to a Man of real Probity to put his Heart at any Time wrong side outward; or rather to let his Tongue and his Heart run a Descant upon Discords. But what I would by no Means agree to

to for any venal or mercenary End, I must assent, with the *Ovidian Politician*, ought to be dispenc'd with where the Emolument of the Fair is in Question. *Stoicks* in Morality may object to this Concession; but *Stoicks* in Love, like *Quakers* in Religion, are to be dispis'd and pity'd, rather than regarded: Or what if we change the Scene, and make a Lover of the *Quaker*, and a Religious of the *Stoick*? I fancy the Metamorphosis would not come short of many in *Ovid*; or at the worst would only issue in a sort of identical Transmutation; since, if *Tom Brown*, a Man that was fully experienc'd, says true, the *Quaker* is as amorous as *Ovid* himself, and as obstinate as any *Stoick* in the Creation. But here comes faithful *Jenny*—

Enter Jenny.

Jen. Do you want to speak with me, Sir?

Bold. No, honest *Jenny*, I do not want to speak with thee, because I do speak with thee: But I hear sad Stories of you, Mrs. *Jenny*.

Jen. Sad Stories, Sir? on what Accouut?

Bold. Nay, nothing any way relating to any Treachery to thy Lady—

Jen. No, I hope not, Sir.

Bold. But a great deal to thy Master—

Jen. I have none, Sir. And if I had, I scorn to be treacherous to any body —

Bold. I much question both your Positions, *Jenny*: As to the first, I am of Opinion no less than three lay Claim to thee — the Knight, the Squire, and my Friend; who as I hope, has a better Claim than both the other —

Jen. If I see with another fair Lady's Eyes, Sir, I hope there is no Treachery in that: Whenever I undertake a Trust, sure I ought to discharge it?

Bold. So far indeed you have discharg'd your self. But in a Family of such exact Oeconomyts, to refuse.

Jen. What, Sir? C

Bold.

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Bold. To take Money for a secret Piece of Service,

Jen. Is there any Treachery in that, Sir?

Bold. It is of a reproachful Example, *Jenny.* And in the Hands of a consummate States-man, would go near to be made next to High Treason.

Jen. You'd advise me then hereafter not to be so meally finger'd.

Bol. Follow my Advice my Girl, and it shall be hard but that thou shal't have Diamond-Rings for every Finger, and a Pair of brave Brilliants for thy Thumbs.

Jen. Ay marry, Sir; now you talk sensibly, if it was but as intelligible.

Bold. Did not 'Squire *Flyblow* see in thy Hands, my Friend's last Letter to *Meritoria*—

Jen. He had got a Glimps of it just as I was putting it in my Pocket. But if I may be so bold, who told you of it?

Bold. Individual he, Mrs. *Jenny*.—

Jen. I always took him for an individual *Coxcomb*.

Bold. But how does your Lady, lovely *Meritoria*, take him?

Jen. She does not say much; but I am of Opinion she would not care if the black Gentleman would take him. But how stupidly do you fine and polite Folks, blame us poor Women for not being able to keep a Secret, and yet you cannot keep your own? But as to the Diamond-Rings, Mr. *Boldman*—

Bold. Now then my Girl, cannot you get some body to write a sham Love Letter to you, and after sealing and reading, deliver it to me?

Jen. Easily, Sir. Our Butler has often attempted it in earnest; but he has not a Diamond-Ring on his own Finger, Mr. *Boldman*. But Mr. *Freeman's Tom* is an arch Rogue; he will do it most dexterously—

Bold. Right. Go get it done out of Hand, and bring it to me.

Jen. It shall be done. But, bless me, what makes my young Lady come out of the House, and in Company

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pany with Mr. Freeman too? If this be their way of keeping their own Secrets, they must not blame other Folks. I'll bring you the Letter presently, Sir. *Going,*
Diamond-Rings! O Lud! *Exit Jenny.*

Enter Meritoria and Freeman.

Mer. Never tell me of a Risq^e, Mr. Freeman; since your Friend has so well advis'd you. I am resolved to take his, and only his Advice in an intricate Case. My Uncle, Sir Solomon, is safe enough in his disconsolate Closet; and I am sure not one of all the Family owes him Affection enough to betray me: Neither would I have you imagine it any Distrust of your Judgment; but two Heads are better than one, and it is a Case that has been press'd upon me by my Uncle this very Morning, which my own Judgment cannot give into.

Free. Your Sentiments, dearest Creature, shall hereafter always influence mine; but see, my Friend is making up to us.

Bold. Your Servant, fair Lady. What strange Adventure draws you out in your Dishabille?

Mer. A very odd one you will say, when you hear it: My inconsolable Uncle sends to speak with me this Morning; and what should it be upon: But to press me in a most urgent Manner to prepare my self.

Bold. For what, I beseech you?

Mer. I can hardly get it out for laughing——tho' he poor Man cry'd almost all the Time he spoke——Grief, says he, my dear Niece, is a dangerous Impairer of the Vitals, as my Neighbour and I have dolefully experienc'd. He, good Man, has had the good Fortune to find a Friend with true Bowels of Compassion, under his inconseable Misfortune, the Loss of his Lady. Baron Belchwell, who hearing of the mortal Calamity, and knowing how much his own Wife us'd to divert my Lord in his good Lady's Life time, has brought her over on that charitable Operation. She is arriv'd

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with the Baron her Husband, and has been at Lord Symon's House these two Days — dear Niece, you must — and there he stopt and cry'd again — ha, ha!

Bold. Dear Lady, let us have it all — I am upon the Tenters.

Mer. You must, dear Niece, says he, go and make her a Visit and bid her heartily welcome, and tell her from me, as soon as my own Dolours will give leave, I will in Person come and auspicate her profound Charity for my Friend.

Bold I long to hear your Ladyship's Reply to this Piece of Oratory.

Mer. My Reply was very short, tho' full; for it begun and ended in one plain Monosyllable, No.

Bold. Bravely reply'd, I'll swear.

Free. But what was his Answer?

Mer. Inconsoleable Grief gave way to Rage, and he began to threaten.

Bold. What could his Threats avail? He has no Power over your Fortune.

Mer. How? No Power over my Fortune, do you say? when he told me, if I refus'd, I should not have Flyblow.

Bold. And doubtless, that he thought was a Clincher.

Free. What Fools do these wise Men approve themselves; while they imagine every Man must entertain the same kind Sentiments of Folly with their own?

Bold. But did it end there, Lady?

Mer. No; for he gave me an Hour's time to consider of it —

Bold. An Hour's too much, by fifty-one Minutes in my Opinion, Lady.

Mer. If that's your Opinion, I have what I came for; and so I will withdraw to the Place from whence I came. I leave Mr Freeman to consult with yon on what we talk'd upon.

Bold. Haste, Lady, get up to your Window, and observe what a Number of vile Examples you have refused

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fused to follow—so degenerate is human Nature—

O Freeman, I congratulate and admire—

Free. Is she not a glorious Creature, *Boldman*?

Bold. Secure from Bribery or Corruption, I'll warrant her—

Free. And yet—

Bold. Away with all, and yet: She is a Species of herself. But see, how the Chairs with their Livery-men crow'd on the fullsome Magnificence?

Free. Let Virtue mourn to see the deadly Spectacle.

Bold. Let Virtue smile to see the Foils she has. One Diamond is worth ten thousand Bristol Stones.

Free. O that Diamond!

Bold. Shall be thine, my Friend, if Wit and Fortune has not quite forsaken us.

Free. Next to *Meritoria*, my Friend will ever be valuable.

Bold. A second Place there, will be always honourable. But see faithful *Jenny*—

Enter Jenny.

Well my pretty Mercury, hast thou succeeded?

Jen. O Sir, Diamonds and Gold-dust are sovereign Specificks with our Sex. There's a Performance on my Part—my Promise—

Bold. But mine shall follow *Jenny*—leave all to me: You shall see, or hear from me very soon.

Free. What Plots are *Jenny* and you upon?

Bold. Secrets at present, Sir—But *Jenny* is Mistress of a Fidelity, that richly deserves our Encouragement.

Free. I believe Mrs. *Jenny* will acknowledge that I am very sensible of it.

Jen. I thank you Gentlemen for your good Opinion: It shall be my Study to increase it. Have you any further Commands, Sir?

Bold. Not at present, Child: But continue to believe me your Friend and a Man of Honour. [Exit *Jenny*.

Free

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Free. My tenderest Services to the dear one, *Jenny.*
It is an ingenious clever Creature.

Bold. I think her so; and have enter'd upon a Project
upon that very Inducement, which if it succeeds will
shew my Esteem—

Free. If I should ask the Question again, perhaps,
I may be again answer'd, it is a Secret.

Bold. She nothing guesses at it her self, as yet; for
which Reason it was not proper to say any more at
that Time. *Flyblow* has put a baited Hook in my
Hand; and I propose, if possible, to catch a Gudgeon
with it.

Free. The Secret, at this Rate, will be in no dan-
ger of being otherwise.

Bold. Read that—

Free. To Mrs. *Jane Betterwou'd.*

[Reading the Superscription.]

Bold. Read it pray; and let us have a Touch of your
Man *Tom's* Style; and ask Questions after—

Free. Dear fair one, [Reads the Letter]
*Could your Eyes as readily pierce into the Secrets of
my Soul, as they did into my Heart, they would dis-
cover every Faculty to be devoted to their Power. O how
happy should I esteem my self, if the Truth I here deli-
ver, could make such Impression in yours, as to induce you
to admit of the sober Addresses of, Madam, your most
devoted, most obedient, and most humble Servant,*

TOM. DEALWELL.

Bold. Ha, ha, ha! Teirce I profess. Did you ever
imagine the Accomplishments of your Servant *Tom*
before?

Free. Is this his false Conception? The Use of it
pray?

Bold. You know I told you, that *Flyblow* had seen a
Letter in *Jenny's* Hands, and wanted to see the Super-
scription, which trusty *Jenny* could not be brib'd to
comply with. Complaining to me, I undertook to
get a Copy of it, the better to lull him in Security, and
stifle

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stifle his Jealousy: And here you have the whole Nos-
trum before you. He went to make a condoleing
Visit to Lord Symon, and I expect him out every
Moment,

Free. Now I take you——

Bold. If he comes, I desire you will be Passive, and
not Passionate. He nothing dreams of you being his
Rival; and I propose to be reveng'd of him for being
yours. Tho' in my Conscience, pretty Jenny carries
more Merit along with her, than his Coach and Six
can merit, and its whole Apurtenancy;

Free. Ha, ha, ha! And can you think to accomplish
it?

Bold. That's a pretty odd sort of a Question, Friend.
But I will only answer by assuring you, I will attempt
it.

Free. Let my Wishes of good Success plead my Par-
don. Now, *Hercules*, fall to work, the Monster ap-
proaches.

Enter Flyblow from Lord Symon's.

Fly. 'Tis wonderful. I profess it is virulently won-
derful to be received so well, so soon from such a dan-
gerous Despondency: Or rather from such a Compli-
cation of prognosticating Symptoms. His Doctress
must certainly have brought over some singular Spe-
cifick along with her. Be what it will, the Cortex
and Snake Root will grow meer Drugs. O my Friend
Boldman, I thought we should have seen you! Did
you not promise?

Bold. Not absolutely promise—how could I, stay-
ing for this Gentleman? But how did you find the
Patient?

Fly. Infinitely better——but at first going in, not
knowing what had happen'd, I began to make my
Complement of Condolance, as usual. My Lord, said
I, it is not the Part of a wise Man, to lay Things so to
Heart.

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Heart. We all are Mortal, and she the best of Mortals has shewn it us. Take Heart of Grace my Lord. Your whole Tenancy are in Fear for you; and as they are scarce recovered from their last Alarm, judge I beseech you, how any new Catastrophe must re-alarm 'em. In your own Good and Safety, it will behove you to consult theirs. Let not corroding Sorrow any longer surround your Heart: Such pernicious Seeds will endanger the fairest Flowers. Alas! did she, whose Loss you now lament, conceive you under that Concern we see you now involv'd; the Poets Fictions would all be verify'd, and she would leave the Realms of Bliss to chide you for your Tenderness, a Tenderness that bodes a second Loss, and equally irreparable. I think that last was smart enough—I would you had been there—Friend Boldman—

Bold. For what, I wonder? You said all that the Matter would bear; you left nothing for other People.

Free. And did you end so, 'Squire? Was there all?

Fly. Mr. Freeman, your Servant. I profess I did not know you. All! no, dear Sir, no. I began then to enquire after his Stomach, his Rest, and other Natural Concomitancies—and was going to lay my Finger and Thumb on his Pulse, when he and his Pair of High German Doctors, laugh'd full in my Face—

Bold. How 'Squire? are you sure of what you say?

Fly. I am very sure of what I say; but I was amaz'd at what I saw: 'Till one of the Consolators took pity of me, and set me to Rights.

Free. And how was it pray? I long for the clearing up of such an unaccountable Phenomenon.

Fly. He told me that his Companion, sensible of the great Danger his Lordship was in, had brought over a Lady, that had a singular Receipt for that Distemper, who on two or three bare Applications, had brought his Lordship to his old Stomach, and had quite drove all melancholy Fumes down to the lower

Or, the contented CUCKOLD. 17

Parts and made a perfect Cure, adding withal, that his Lordship was so sensible of her good Offices, that he was resolv'd to keep her here for fear of Relapse, and sent her Husband back with a Ship-load of Gratuities, till such time as he could better spare her—

Fly. This is great News—

Fly. I think so, — and for that Reason am going to communicate it to Sir *Solomon*; for their Maladies being one and the same, why may not the Plaister do for both? But I must make haste for fear some body gets before me; for my Lord is resolv'd To-morrow, to summon all his Tennancy, and lay before them the almost miraculous Cure, that the Doctress may receive due Thanks for the Operation. But hark ye, *Boldman*, a Word with you. You'll excuse the Freedom, Mr. *Freeman*—

Free. No Apology 'Squire: Busines must be minded— (Freeman walks aside.)

Fly. to Bold. Did you remember your Friend?

Bold. The Letter you mean—I have done the Busines; and more than you are aware of—

Fly. And how is it?

Bold. Would you have me open Matters here? Indeed I have more Tendernes for you: I would not trust my own Brother with half that I know. However, I will give you a Sight of the Superscription to satisfy you of my Integrity—

Fly. Reads. *Jane Betterwou'd.* Enough, enough, I am satisfy'd—

Bold. Are you so; Then what will you be, when you hear all she told me? I must tell you she may deserve more from you, than the Doctress deserv'd from my Lord—

Fly. Say'st thou so? Why, did she mention any Thing of her Lady—

Bold. How inadvertently you act! Is this a Place?

18 *The INCONSOLEABLES:*

Fly. Well, well. Come to Sir *Solomon's*, and ask for me. I'll engage we'll have half a Dozen private Rooms there, if there be Occasion for 'em.

Bold. An Hour hence, I suppose——

Fly. Thereabouts: But don't stay longer for fear of an Accident. Adieu. *Exit Flyblow.*

Free, joining him.) Well, have you discharged your Pop-gun?

Bold. Not yet, but I have Cock'd and Prim'd in order to it.

Free. Did he bite freely?

Bold. I rais'd the Mud a little to keen him; and I dare answer for't, when the Bait is presented, he will not nibble. But who have we here coming out of Sir *Solomon's*?

Free. My Man is one; but who the other with him is, I cannot say.

Bold. I know him, it is *Flyblow's* Man.

Free. What has the Fool to do with him? I shall give the Rascal a Reprimand.

Bold. And he'll be no wiser than his Master if he regards it. What Inconvenience can you apprehend? The Fellow does that naturally of himself, which you ought to have put him upon. But let me observe: They are too intent upon their own Business to mind any Body else. Have we not less to do than they, to mind what they do? —However to pleasure you——

Tom and Crimp come forward.

[They stand aside.

Tom. Then you say, you have got a new Course to steer?

Cri. Not so much of a new Course, as a pretty many new Bearings. I suppose my Master will speedily re-commence *Sonnetier*, and my Errand then will be under the Direction of the Minute-handle. I out-number'd

Or, the contented CUCKOLD. 19

number'd the Hours Yesterday, and of twelve Messages and an odd one, I am apt to believe, the Party receiv'd never a one, no not so much as the odd one.

Tom. How so, Mr. Crimp?

Cri. I don't know how so—— But I apprehend the Confident is no Friend to our Cause. She receives them all; but her Returns are so sleeveless, and in all of a Piece, that to me it looks as if her Lady knew nothing of the Matter.

Tom. You should endeavour to creep into her good Graces.

Cri. If I creep on all Fours, I believe I shall never get there. But I intend to acquaint my Master with my Apprehensions; and then I suppose my Lady's Woman will be glad to turn over a new Leaf.

Tom. Go, you talk like a Fool there; that's the Way to spoil all. Ever keep in with the Woman, if you propose to succeed with the Lady. Come, you're an old Acquaintance, and therefore I'll lend you a helping Hand. I am not amis with pretty Mrs. Jane. I shall see her To-morrow, and then I'll undertake to settle all Preliminaries. This will be much the safest Way, Mr. Crimp, for I have known many a Man loose a good Place for want of a good Understanding with my Lady's Woman: And I believe your Place is too good to run such a Hazard.

Cri. I can't say but the Place is well enough, especially as the Squire standing on his own Credit, takes a Delight his Servants should go clean, as he calls it. But for all that I should not have stay'd so long, if the Squire had not been under the Expectation of a Place; in which Case, I was to have been provided for. But for all his Cringings and Palaverings, I don't find he is nearer a Place than at first, unless it be the young Lady's Place; and she does not look like one that would let me ever be the better for that——

Tom. Come, take Courage, Time will mend —
A little Patience——

20 *The INCONSOLEABLES:*

Cri. Nay, truly, a little Patience will serve; for my Master is come out with a Resolution to press the Wedding forward, and I can tell you that Preparations are making at home, as if we were to have a Wedding Dinner afore Night. I heard him say he would be put off no longer, that he wou'd not—

Tom. Say'st thou so, my Boy—then there's no waiting for To-morrow. Go about your Busness, and I will immediately back, and talk with Mrs. *Jane*. I warrant thee, I'll do the Jobb.—

Cri. Where shall I find you an Hour hence?

Tom. At the Cock and Bottle—Where should we meet?—

Cri. You will not fail—

Tom. No more than a *Quaker* his Quarterly Meeting.

Adieu. [Tom goes in, and Crimp the other Way.

Bold. Now, Friend, what say you to Tom's Familiarity? Is there not a visible Advantage?

Free. Accidentally a little, and not much.

Bold. No! Don't you hear of Preparations for a speedy Wedding?

Free. They nothing alarm me: I have such a Confidence in my dear *Meritoria*'s Courage and Integrity, that Sir *Solomon* with all his *Blunderbusses* cannot work in me one uneasy Thought. He has been a Booted Missionary in his Time, and made Converts of Persons of large Fortunes to little Ends; and perhaps under like Views he may have projected some such Attempts upon *Meritoria*: But I know her to be such a Contemner of Bribery and Corruption, and all that is arbitrary, that the Attempt will only raise her Derision, and establish her settled Principles in Virtue and real Honour.

Bold. A great Character, *Freeman*, for a Woman; and yet I have nothing within my Knowledge or Belief to lessen it. But if you will reap no Advantage from the Discovery, I shall—

Free. Speed you well: But wherein I pray?

Bold.

Or, the contented CUCKOLD.

21

Bold. The Proverb cries, Strike while the Iron's hot: And if he is so hot for a Wedding, I shall approve myself but a cold Artificer, not to make a right Use of the Opportunity. Therefore under your Patronage, I must get Admittance to Sir Solomon's; and while you are entertaining *Meritoria*, I must concert my proper Schemes with my Favourite *Jenny*.

Free. I think *Flyblow* appointed you there.

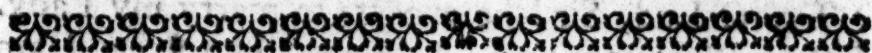
Bold. Right; and I then look'd upon the Omen as good; but I like it better now.

Free. Thou'rt a Man of a sanguine Temper, *Boldman*: But to me there appears invincible Difficulties.

Bold. The more Difficulties the greater the Honour. And as Honour is all I Aim at, I hope that Virtue at least, will not be an idle Spectator.

Free. A glorious setting out Friend! Follow your Leader.

Bold. Let Cowards fright themselves, with what may The Bold are sure to conquer, or escape. (hap,



A C T II.

S C E N E, Sir Solomon's House. *A noble Anti-Room, furnish'd very richly with Pictures and Pier Glasses, after the nicest Manner.*

Enter *Jenny* and *Boldman*.

Bold. Ere we shall be private you say.

Jen. I have borrow'd the Key of the Groom for that very purpose.

Bold. Very well, come sit down.

Jenny. By no means, Sir, in your Company. I know my Place.

Bold.

22 *The INCONSOLEABLES:*

Bold. I say, by all means, Madam: For I know the Place I design you. Look ye, Child, Fidelity is a Virtue so rare to be met with, that from a generous Spirit it will always exact Respect. After this Preface, either fit, or, as the Irishman says, you will conclude my Speech before I have begun.

Jen. If you will have it so, Sir; I must obey.—

Bold. That's right. If you remember, I mention'd somewhat to you of Diamond Rings.—

Jen. Indeed, Sir, you did so; but I took it, as, I suppose, you intended it, in jest.

Bold. Indeed there you took me wrong: For, if you will take a good Husband along with them, I come now to prepare a Way to make good my Promise; and you know the Condition was, that you should follow my Advice.

Jen. I'm sure there is not a Gentleman in England whose Advice I'd sooner follow than yours.

Bold. That's well. What think you of 'Squire Flyblow for a Husband?

Jen. O Lud, Sir! he expects to marry my Lady.

Bold. That you know he can't. However, I am a Lover of moral Justice; and therefore, as my Friend takes away a Wife from him, I think myself bound in Conscience to provide him another.

Jen. You can never be in earnest, Sir: Why he has a Coach and Six, and Three Thousand a Year.

Bold. And thou hast Virtue and Fidelity, *Jenny*.

Jen. But will that buy me fine Cloaths?

Bold. And Jewels too.

Jen. Pardon me, Sir, I cannot think you in earnest: How can it be brought about?

Bold. Leave it to me. Only be diligent, and follow my Directions.

Jen. But my Lady, Sir; What will she say?

Bold. Wish you Joy; visit you; and receive your Visits.

Jen.

Or, the contented CUCKOLD. 23

Jen. Why, he'll beat me, as soon as he finds it out.

Bold. To prevent any thing like that shall be my Care.

Jen. I don't know what to say; but I am sure you are more of a Gentleman, than to lead me into a Fool's Paradise, as the Saying is; and therefore I leave my Matters with you. It cannot be, that you intend me Shame: I never offended you.

Bold. I should be a Brute, if I did, Jenny; and act against Principle too: For *Freeman* knows I always had a Value for thee.—Nay, which is more, he is acquainted with my Design.

Jen. Indeed.—Well then, done Sir: Tell me what I am to do; and I'll be sure to follow Directions very faithfully.

Bold. Where is your Husband, that is to be?

Jen. The Squire is in the dark Room with the Knight.

Bold. He desir'd me to send for him when I came.

Can you get him hither?

Jen. Very easily, Sir.

Bold. But, as soon as he leaves me, be sure to let me see you again, to give an Account of my Negotiations.

Jen. I will, Sir, (going.) But, Lud! I would not have any of our Folks get an Inkling of the Matter for the World. [Exit Jenny.

Bold. Now, Mercury, lend me a little of thy better Sort of Artifice.—Let me see, *Flyblow* wants a Wife; I provide him a better than his whole Estate can merit. So far so good.—He may object that he wanted a Woman of Family.—His Grandfather was a Grazier.—Right again, say I. But she has no Fortune—He has too much—Therefore is she come to put Fortune in her Wits again; that she may no longer encumber the Earth with a heterodox Generation, who can plead no other Title

24 *The INCONSOLEABLES:*

to their Super-abundancies of Treasure, than their own Impudence, or her Levity. On the other Hand, here is a helpless young Creature, that has served an Apprenticeship under Merit herself, is handsomely provided for, to the Joy of all good Men, and the Grief of only Knaves and Fools. Gentlemen of the Jury, you must find for the Defendant. In short, my Authorities are so authentick, that I dare submit the Cause to the impartial Judgment of Mankind. Therefore, in the Name of Equity, go to Work, *Boldman.*

Enter Freeman and Meritoria.

Free. What! Friend *Boldman* a Prisoner of State!

Bold. You are not my Goaler: Therefore how came you here?

Free. We are Persons of Trust, Sir; and, which is more, are charg'd with a Message from your Goaler; that two polite Embassadors (as Embassadors go now a-days) being sent on the Busines of Condolance to the Knight, the Squire had made himself Master of the Ceremonies; for which Reason it would be half-an Hour before he could wait upon you.

Bold. Very good: — You know it is the Place of us little People to attend the Motions of the Great.

Mer. But what is the Busines you are upon, Mr. *Boldman?*

Bold. *Meritoria* does not use to ask unnecessary Questions. Has not my Friend told you?

Free. Besides, though you are the Pink of Privy-Councillors, you may stand in need of Assistance or Advice; and we are come to offer both.

Bold. As I keep within the Purlieus of the Law, I might reject the Offer: But out of a due Sense of human Insufficiency and Frailty, embrace the Alliance.

Mer.

Or, the contented CUCKOLD. 25

Mer. Well; what can I do?

Bold. What *Jenny* has often, as in Duty bound, done for you, Lady. Make her outwardly as like yourself as ever you can; that she may appear, under a Mask, to be identically your Ladyship.

Mer. There will be no great Difficulty in that: We are not unlike in Person.

Bold. As I have provided, you should say, Hoop-Petticoats for the Eyes, to hide those fatal Murderers—

Mer. But when will all this be done?

Bold. So soon as I have settled with the 'Squire all Preliminaries, and given *Jenny* her sailing Orders.

Free. Take care they be full; and don't imagine she is on a Cruize to *Spain*.

Bold. You have a poor Opinion of my Parts, to think I can't take Warning by other Peoples Follies.

Free. I don't believe indeed you will blunder to evidence the Consistency of your Conduct. But have you never a vacant Post for your humble Servant? Tho' I will deal honourably and above-board with you, I have no Money to give—

Bold. Nor I neither: For I have no dirty Work to do. However, for once I'll go out of the common Road, and, as a Friend, think of you, though you are honest.

Mer. Well, we had not best stay too long: The Audience may be over; and it may be highly inconvenient for either of us to be seen in your Company.

Bold. At this Time, I confess, Lady, yours is not very eligible: Tho' before we set out on our Adventure, another Conference may be necessary.

Free. We'll be ready to obey your Summons: but who shall be the Messenger in *Jenny's* Absence?

E

Bold:

26 The INCONSOLEABLES:

Bold. Where's trusty Tom?

Free. Within—

Bold. Can you have a better? I dare put my Life in his Hands.

Free. Be it so—We leave you to send you better Company.

[Ex. Freeman & Meritoria.

Bold. Not better: tho' at present more necessary, if you please. [Exeunt.

I fancy it was a fundamental Error in the Great Propagando Man, *Ovid*, That the falling out of Lovers is necessary to the renewing of Love. In Tempers of Levity, where Sense has too much the Ascendant of Reason, there may be somewhat in it; or where the Passions, like the waste Waters of a Mill, are to be let off for Fear of a Redundancy, which otherways may be dangerous as a Repletion or Plethora in human Bodies; or where a Stagnation may be apprehended, such little Breaches may be excusable: Yet, if I was to set up for a Doctor in the Art, I should choose to recommend the Pattern of my friendly Pair. They seem to have digested the whole Oeconomy of Amour; and so to have consulted the whole Region of Prudence and Affection, that all after is like to be Carpet-Ground, and yet in no such Danger of Surfeiting, as to render a Jolt necessary to the settling the Stomach for Health's-sake. Such an entire Confidence on both Sides, such an equal Resignation to each other's Will, must render the Philosophical Dogma useless; since by a wise Forbearance they will have nothing to bear, but a rightly regulated System of Tranquillity. Moderation is certainly a first Principle in the School of Virtue, as it ought to be in that of Pleasure: For let who will make his Observation in either, the Result will evince, that all Excess will degenerate into Disease in both.

Enter

Enter Jenny.

Jen. He is coming, Sir: But, O Lud! we are all undone!

Bold. What's the Matter, pr'ythee?

Jen. Just at the Stair-foot he met Mr. *Freeman* and my Lady hand in hand.

Bold. That was somewhat unlucky. But how ended the Rencounter?

Jen. Mr. *Freeman* told him, with a Wink and a Smile, that you waited for him: Upon which, without waiting to hear further, I curb'd my Female Curiosity, and came forward to acquaint you with the Accident.

Bold. It was prudently done, my Girl. Nevertheless, go back, and let him not want a Mistress of the Ceremonies. I must see how *Flyblow* takes the Phenomenon, before I can read any Lecture upon it.

[Exit *Jenny*.]

Suppose——Hang it, I will remain a staunch *Quaker* in my Opinion, and suppose nothing against my Interest. Obstinacy shall have the Preheminence of Argument; and I will persist, because it is my Pleasure so to do.

Enter Jenny and Flyblow.

Fly. O your Servant, Mr. *Boldman*. I have made you stay, I fear.

Bold. No Apology, Sir: When it is to serve a Friend, I always constitute my Patience my humble Servant.

Fly. Who do you think I met, as I came to you?

Bold. That commonly begins Discourse; but if People of Sense would consider rightly, it is very improper: How should I guess whom you met?

Fly. Very true, indeed, very true—Excuse me;

28 *The INCONSOLEABLES:*

I will offend no more in that Nature: Your Friend Freeman and my Mistress, hand in hand, egad! I was somewhat surpriz'd at first, and wonder'd what he did here—

Bold. How could you wonder at that, knowing I had undertaken your Affair? It is impossible a Man can be in two Places at once; for which Reason I call'd him in to my Assistance.

Fly. Good. You agree in your Accounts: He signify'd as much, and then I was easy. But I think, Mrs. Jane, we shall at present have no further Occasion for you.

Bold. You may stay in the next Room, Mrs. Jenny: We may want you.

Fly. Ay, ay; do so: We may want you to conclude the Farce.

Jen. I shall attend, Sir. (*going*) Lud, he is a pure Man. How cleverly he has turn'd the Tables?

[*Exit Jenny.*

Fly. Well, now for your Budget of Nostrums, *Boldman.*

Bold. In the first Place, there's the Letter I promis'd you a Sight of; which, I am satisfy'd, she would have parted with to no Body on Earth beside myself.

Fly. (*reading the Letter to himself*) Why this is a downright Love-Letter: But i'faith so very pretty, I could almost be tempted to take a Copy of it.

Bold. Put it in your Pocket: I will answer it to her. Poor Girl, she is far gone in Love. I believe she will be marry'd To-morrow, if not To-day—.

Fly. The Girl is a good likely Girl, clean, pretty and well-shap'd; and if she had but as much Money as her Mistress, I vow I should be puzzled, which to choose.

Bold. I am sure she has been vastly serviceable in your Cause, as you will agree before we part. You ought to give her a Portion, 'Squire.

. *Fly.*

Or, the contented CUCKOLD. 29

Fly. Why if I find her Service so considerable, as you say, perhaps I may throw away ten or twenty Guineas upon her.

Bold. It is my Opinion she will deserve so many Hundreds before we have done.

Fly. Hundreds, say you? No, no, that can never be: However, let us hear.

Fly. In the first Place, she has teiz'd her Mistress into a profound Opinion of you.

Fly. That will want Credentials: I profess, I see nothing in it, and therefore can believe nothing of it. She look'd upon me just now, methought, as the Devil looks over *Lincoln*, as the Saying is.

Bold. Meer Female Grimace; as you will be sensible, when I have let you into the Secret.

Fly. Do not delay it then: I want to be sensible.

Bold. Who doubts it? — that ever saw *Meritoria*. And yet, as you say, pretty *Jenny*, if she had but her Lady's Fortune —

Fly. But she has not, and therefore go on. How shall I be able to fathom the Depth I have in the Lady's Affections?

Bold. Nothing more easy — Pray tell me, did you ever break the Matter to her? Was not the Uncle always apply'd to?

Fly. Why, has not he her Fortune in his Hands?

Bold. But no more Power over it than I. Judge you then how a Lady of Spirit can bear such a Neglect? Neglect did I call it? 'tis downright Slight — nay Contempt.

Fly. Nay, nay, don't carry the Matter too far neither: Tho' I profess she has some Reason on her Side.

Bold. O, do you so, Sir; then you are like to come to a better Understanding. For said she, when *Jenny* press'd her upon that Point, 'Squire *Flyblow* is the Man of the Universe for me: Such a Shape, such a

Pair

30 *The INCONSOLEABLES:*

Pair of Hands, such a Pair of Legs, such a Face, and such a Head-piece a-top of all——

Fly. But did she say all this?

Bold. Call *Jenny* in, if yo doubt me——

Fly. It needs not; it needs not; It is so like Truth, I can believe it on your bare Word.

Bold. But then, says she, never to make his Court to me; but always to apply to my Uncle! I would sooner marry the dear Man incognito, and without my Uncle's knowing of it.——

Fly. Why, lack-a-day, I don't desire her Uncle should know any thing of it, if she would but marry me privately.

Bold. Now you are come to the Point: That's the very Busines *Freeman* is now a-managing. And said I, when I gave him his Instructions, as the Lady is so well inclin'd to the 'Squire, if I can but bring him to a Sense of his past Error, I cannot see why the Busines may not be dispatch'd this Morning, while the Tenants are paying their Respects to my Lord. The Uncle will be fully taken off, and the Eyes of the whole Tenantry so busily employ'd, that no Soul will take any Notice of it.——

Fly. I profess, *Boldman*, you are a perfect *Matchiavel* in your Plotting. I dare say, nothing hinders your being receiv'd into the Administration but your Cunning.

Bold. Yes, I am afraid there is another great Obstacle. But no Matter: Let us go on.

Fly. Pray do so.

Bold. And now I think it high Time to repeat my Suit for pretty *Jenny*——A Girl that has been so serviceable already; nay, and must be more so; or else all our Fat will be in the Fire: For her Lady will take no one Step without first having her Approbation.

Fly. Well; what would you have me do for her?

Bold.

Or, the contented CUCKOLD. 31

Bold. She is to be marry'd To-morrow.. Give her your Blessing in a Portion——

Fly. How much?

Bold. Hang it : What's a Thousand Pound or two to One who has done you such Services already ; and is to do so much greater——For, don't mistake me, I would have it express'd in the Note, that she shall help you to your Lady ; and to be paid on no other Condition.—

Fly. That is somewhat indeed :—Well, on that Condition, I will make it Five Hundred Pounds.—

Bold. Never stand for Trifles ; make it for One Thousand Pounds. There is Pen and Ink in the next Room. Write it, and bring her in ; and I'll tell her what she has to do further.

Fly. It is too much : However, to comply with your Importunities, I will make it Seven Hundred.

Bold. Make it a Thousand——I'll pawn my Life it will be your own another Day.

Fly. Since you will have it so—— (Goes in)

Bold. A *Matchiavel!* did'st thou call me ? I'll pawn my Reputation upon it thou art none. Yet Fools and Beaux (if they are not synonymous) are oftner the Martyrs of Self-Conceit, than the weakest of the weaker Sex. How eagerly did he swallow his own Praise, so soon as ever the fulsome Bait was presented to him ! All Things after went down as glib as Oil or Syllabub. Fine Ornaments to a Court ! I wonder they are not press'd into the Service, and monopoliz'd as they monopolize Adulation. Honour disdains that senseless Sacrifice, and Merit at the Motion hangs its Head like a fair Flower choak'd up with stinking Weeds. Tell *Debrio* what the World confesses Truth, he turns away his Head, and will not hear : Tell *Swag*, what his vile Flatterers scarce fancy true, he makes his Jaws extend from Ear to Ear, and thinks his Swallow yet too narrow for his Fortune.

Fly.

32 *The INCONSOLEABLES:*

Fly. Well, there's the Note, and here's the Maid.
Now let us go to work as soon as possible.

Bold. Are you at Liberty? Have you discharg'd
your Attendance within, I mean?

Fly. Not quite—In Decorum I must go and take
my Leave.

Bold. Do so. And as soon as that Ceremony is
over, dress yourself for a greater. In the Mean-
time, I'll prepare all Things at my Lord's, whose
Chaplain will be ready for the Execution. I have
spoke to him.

Fly. I go, I fly : I leave all Things to you.—
I shall think every Minute an Age till all is over.

(Exit.)

Bold. And, for my Part, I care not what you
think, when all is over. (aside)

Well, *Jenny*, what said your Husband?

Jen. My Husband, Sir, as you are pleas'd to call
him, said a many fine Things. He told me how
much I was oblig'd to you; and that at your Re-
quest he was going to give me a Fortune; for he
heard that I was going to be marry'd.—

Bold. To all which you answered—

Jen. Nothing—

Bold. How? Not so much as to thank him, *Jen-*
nny? That was hard—

Jen. Truly, Sir, you had put other Thoughts in-
to my Head; which made me afraid of saying ra-
ther too much than too little. Beside, my good La-
dy always advis'd me against letting my Tongue
run.

Bold. Very well, *Jenny*; and I hope you'll ever
follow your good Lady's Example, and then I shall
never repent my Kindness. Now let us examine the
Note (opening it.) How! a promissory Note?—

Better and better— (reads)

I promise to pay to Mrs. Jane Betterwou'd—

How came he by that?—O, your Letter—

Jen.

Or, the contented CUCKOLD. 33

Jen. No indeed, Sir; I had forgot that—He ask'd me my Name, and I told him.

Bold. You'd been much in the wrong if you had not, Jenny. But let us see— (Reads again, *I promise to pay to Mrs. Jane Betterwou'd One Thousand Pounds for her Services in procuring my Wife, which One Thousand Pounds are to be paid on the Day of my Marriage, and not before. Witness my Hand, this 30th June, 1738.*)

Timothy Flyblow, Esq.

Take it, Jenny; 'tis thy own. Keep it carefully, and he shall not reproach thee with the Want of a Fortune.

Jen. Dear Sir, crown all your other undeserved Goodnesses; and keep it for me.

Bold. Since thou desir'st it, Jenny, I will so. I will take thee under my Guardianship.

Jen. But what am I to do next, Sir?

Bold. Your Lady has full Instructions— But where is Tom?

Enter Tom.

Tom. Away, away—you must clear the Room: Sir Solomon and his Guests are coming to see the Pictures. The Groom is in a sad Panick for the Key.

Jen. You may take it, and carry it to him, Thomas; I have another Key that will let the Gentleman through my Lady's Apartment. Never stand mopeing, Man. You'll let Sir Solomon surprize us; and then there will be the Devil and all to do. Come, Sir, this Way. [Exit Bold. & Jenny.

Tom. I am afraid that there is the Devil to do already, Mrs. Jane. I wish I have not play'd the Fool and overstood my Market: For I don't greatly like these private Caballings. Heigh ho! If I have, I must take it for my Pains. O, here they come.

F

Enter

34 *The INCONSOLEABLES:*

*Enter Sir Solomon, Baron Belchwell, Baron Scoopall,
and 'Squire Flyblow.* (Exit Tom,

Sir Sol. Your Account of the Recovery of my dear Lord, has so reviv'd my wasted Spirits, that I can shift to crawl over the Room without a Staff. Ah! 'Squire *Flyblow*, what would you have given to have seen me do so Yesterday?

Fly. Dear Sir *Solomon*, the Universe had been little enough for the Purchase: For without you, what would the Universe be?

Sir Sol. O, 'Squire, your Love transcends your Reason. Well, *Barons*, I have press'd you to your Mortification: My Nakedness is apparent to your Eyes. They cost a deal of Money: But whether the Connoisseur is visible in the Choice——

B. Belch. Ver fine, indeed, Sir Knight, ver fine.

B. Scoop. Fort Curieux——

Fly. Every Body that sees them, says the same; and acknowledge the Genius in choosing, equal to that of the Painting.

B. Belch. to Bar. Scoop. — It be ver well for de *Englischman*.

B. Scoop. Mush, ver mush.

Sir Sol. Alas! our *Englisch* Genius's are nothing comparatively to the Foreign.

Fly. You must not say that, Sir *Solomon*, in the Hearing of these Gentlemen, whose Eyes will refute you: But Sir *Solomon* is known to be possess'd of an universal Genius.

Jenny entering. It was unlucky their having bolted the Door on the other Side. But I must relieve him. — (whispers Flyblow)

Fly. Well, I go and relieve him— (goes out with Jenny the same Way)

B. Scoop. Who be dat ver pretty Lady, Sir Knight?

Sir

Or, the contented CUCKOLD. 35

Sir Sol. My Niece's Woman.

B. Belch. Oh, oh; she be de Servant then! Vat need you vant a Cure wid such a Convenience near you?

B. Scoop. She be not so plump; yet the Remedy do not whole consist in dat. She will do, taka my Vord for't.

Sir Sol. Do you think so, Gentlemen? I confess, I have a great Inclination—to be cur'd—I will think on't.

Enter Flyblow and Boldman.

(*Jenny paffes through, the Barons staring after her*)

Fly. Sir *Solomon*, I have made bold to introduce a Friend of mine—He has long had a Desire to view your fine Collection of Paintings; and hearing you was now here——

Sir Sol. Mr. *Boldman*, I think?

Bold. The same, Sir *Solomon*, at your Service.

Sir Sol. You must pardon me, Sir; Grief has grievously impair'd my Eye-sight. But, 'Squire, you do your Friend and yourself too an Injury, to make Apologies: My Friends oblige me most when freest.

Bold. I am oblig'd to you, Sir *Solomon*, for the Complement.

Fly. I'll say that for Sir *Solomon*, no Man in Life is more communicative than he. He is the Glory of the *British* Nation for that.

Bold. When a Gentleman is possess'd of Rarities, the Inclination to expose them is nothing more than natural. What say you, Sir? (*to Baron Belchwell*)

B. Belch. It be ver true, Sir—De Busness of Mankind is to be obliging—and communicate.

Bold. I think so—in every Thing but Woman-kind: Yet some will stretch a Point that Way——

Fly. Come Friend, come; let us fall upon the Busness we came upon—The Pictures.—Hark you, *Boldman*, let me speak with you (*taking him aside*)

that is the Gentleman, whose Lady was Doctrals to my Lord, and cur'd him—You have heard of it—

Bold. Heard of it? Why, the World rings of it: But I am sorry you told me of it.

Fly. Why so, pry'thee? I did it in good Nature.

Bold. Nay, there's no great Harm done: Only your good Nature has put a Clog upon my good Breeding.

Fly. I did it on Purpose, Man.

Bold. I confess, you was in the Right on't, whatever others are. Let's look on the Pictures, 'Squire: What a fine Piece is this? *Virginius* stabbing his own Daughter to preserve her Chastity,—These Romans sure must have imbib'd an odd Sort of Notion of Virtue.

Fly. Why odd?

Bold. If it was a right one, it is Pity they did not leave somewhat of the Spirit of it for the Use of their Posterity.

Fly. What do mean, to the Pope of *Rome*?

Bold. Ay, and to the Pope of *Germany* too. Happy for us poor Protestants, that we have no Need on't.

Fly. You are an Historian, *Boldman*—What is the Design of this Piece? I don't understand it.

Bold. It is the Harlot *Cleopatra* crossing the Sea in a Wherry to lose her Pander the Empire.

Fly. There you are out: I'm sure that is no Sea.

Bold. You are in the right, and I'm wrong: It is the River *Cydnus*, but it runs into the Sea; or, at leaft, runs into a River, that runs into the Sea. See how the Jilt holds between her Fingers a Pearl of vast Dimensions, and consequently of no little Price.

Fly. What is the Meaning of that, pr'ythee?

Bold. It is to inflame Inflammation itself. Had I been at the Back of her, I'd have thrown in fix Ounces of Camphire instead of it, and made a Nun of her, or nothing.

Fly.

Or, the contented CUCKOLD. 37

Fly. Could you have found in your Heart to have treated Beauty in such a tyrannical Manner?

Bold. Now you talk of Beauty; see here: I'll shew you Beauty in Perfection: Lovely *Lucretia!* Thou ought'st to be the Female Saint, since thou waft so great a Glory to the Sex. Ravish'd and abus'd! See how she sacrifices Beauty, and all its appending Pleasures, to the Manes of her Virtue. A President too glorious for this pious Age to follow; where the kind Husbands hold the Door, and tender-hearted Brothers prostitute their Sisterhood for worldly Pomp, or worldly Lucre: I see a Statesman's Room now a-days is to be set out with much such Antithetical Furniture as a Whore's Closet. The *Bible* and *Practice of Piety* set out this, and *Pourtraits of Chastity* the other.

Sir Sol. If you are so correct an Historian, Mr. *Boldman*, pray cast your Eye on this Piece, and give me your Opinion of it.

Bold. It is a fine Piece indeed—*A Dutchman*; or a *Scotchman*; the Painter? Which?

Sir Sol. Several Vertuoso's have perus'd it, and pass'd their Judgments upon it; but two only of the whole ever agreed in their Sentiments. They gave it to be the Picture of an Empress in the *Hellespont*; somewhere in the *West Indies*.

Bold. Aye, that same *Hellespont* in the *West Indies* is a prodigious wealthy Place, if we could find it: But this is the Picture of the Grand Sultaness *Roxalana*, who by her female Wiles so bewitch'd the doting Emperor, that of a Concubine he made her Empress: And the many Tragedies she committed after, sufficiently evidenc'd the Wisdom of the Action. But the Gentlemen, Sir *Solomon*, seem to be no great Admirers of History; and therefore I'll take my Leave at present, with a Promise to make it up any other Time you'll command me.

Sir

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Sir Sol. I thank you kindly, good Mr. *Boldman*:
Bold. Your humble Servant, good Sir *Solomon*:
Gentlemen, yours more than your own—I am going to prepare, 'Squire.

Fly. I'll be ready.

Sir Sol. I am glad he has left us, 'Squire. I have a Thing to communicate, that, as these Gentlemen say, my future Health very much depends upon; for which Reason, I assure myself of your Readiness to assist.

Fly. My Ambition stands a-tip-toe to serve Sir *Solomon*.

Sir Sol. And yet I am apprehensive—

Fly. Apprehend nothing, Sir *Solomon*, from me, if it is to do you Good—

Sir Sol. Nay, I have the Opinion of both these Gentlemen for it—What say you, Gentlemen?

B. Belch. Sans doute, it will cure a you.

B. Scoop. Yaw han won Evidence before you.

Sir Sol. Do you hear, 'Squire?

Fly. I hear them talk: But I hear nothing of what you'd have me do, Sir *Solomon*.

Sir Sol. It is not any very great Matter, 'Squire—

Fly. Great or little, there is no likelihood of its being done, if you won't unbosom.

Sir Sol. It is only that you will use your Interest with my Niece's Woman, *Jenny*, to be my Doctress.

Fly. Is that all, Sir *Solomon*?

Sir Sol. That is all, indeed.

Fly. A small Matter, truly—And here is a Pair as fit for your Purpose—they are us'd to the Work,

Sir Sol. What do you mean, 'Squire?

Fly. At present, just as I say—Never employ a Novice, Sir *Solomon*, when you have Adepts before you.

Sir Sol. Are you in earnest?

Fly.

Fly. I am a Stranger to the Methods of such Address. I heard a Connoisseur in the Art of Rakery say, that an *English Pimp* is the most awkward Animal in the Universe.

Sir Sol. But this is by Way of Medicine—

Fly. It is a Science I never made my Study—There are your Doctors.—Besides, she is no marry'd Woman. The Prescription is defective.

Sir Sol. And you will not?—

Fly. Interfere with a Practitioner—Indeed I will not. Try her yourself, Sir *Solomon*: You need not marry her after; and consequently there will be no Danger of a Relapse—

Sir Sol. And you expect to marry my Niece, do you?

Fly. Whoever I marry, or whenever I marry, I shan't turn Barterer.

Sir Sol. Get you out of my House—Have I entertain'd a Viper?

Fly. A Pimp, in my Opinion, is a Sort of a Viper; and so I take my Leave, Sir *Solomon*.—

Upon my Word, *Boldman* is a Conjurer: The Thousand Pounds Ink was well apply'd. [Exit Flyblow.

Sir Sol. (*walking in a Heat*) Sure nothing can be more irksome to a generous Soul, than be deny'd every Thing he asks.—For here does the Great Man differ from the little One, if he is alike to be refus'd. The Eastern Oeconomy therefore, in my Opinion, is excellent: Where Disobedience is Death, there is no great Danger of Contumacy. But our foggy Climate will not bear such Rarefactions. What must I do? They have put it into my Head; and Nations, there entertain'd, are not easily dislodg'd, especially Notions of that Nature. They seem to be under Concern for me; and I dare not motion it myself to her, for fear the Gypsy top Example upon me, and delude me into another second-hand Matrimony. I'll try 'em: Men that were good Pimps in

the

40 *The INCONSOLEABLES:*

the Land of their Nativity, can hardly deviate here. Besides, I am Cashier to my Lord; their Gratuity must pass through my Hands; and tho' the Wages of broken Commandments, some of it will purify in my Coffers; and the more, the less Regard they shew to my Pleasure: For that ever was with me the Touchstone of Merit: And where is the Man in his Wits that is not of the same Mind?

(*Sir Solomon goes up to them.*)

B. Belch. Vel, Sir Knight, heben your Friend you forsaken?

Sir Sol. Even so, Gentlemen—Left me in the Lurch, and refus'd to serve my Occasions. What must I do?

B. Scoop. Breken yor Mind to her yor sel, Sir Sol.

Sir Sol. That must not be, for many Reasons—But if it was once broke, I could—

B. Belch. Vat coud a you?—

Sir Sol. I could write a Letter, if I had any Body to entrust with the Delivery of it.

B. Belch. Vil ano your Valet do?

Sir Sol. By no Means—Not any of my Family.—They knew my last Deary, and my Concern for her—

B. Belch. Sal me show de Difference of de Dutch Principle and de Inglis—Dare you trusten me—

Sir Sol. O my dear Friend, do you think my Lord shall not thank you for the charitable Work? I will take Care he shall know your good Offices to me, as well as to him. But will you undertake it?

B. Belch. Yaw, yaw—Yee sal have a Tast of Foreign Docity—

Sir Sol. Dear Gentlemen, come in, and I will write my Letter, and give Instructions to the Occasion.

*And if my Jenny lend a gentle Ear,
Adieu my dear Defunct, for living dear.*

ACT

A C T III.

S C E N E *Lord Symon's House.*

A State Room.

Enter Freeman and Meritoria.

Free. F S T E E M will ever carry me the Lengths
you ask.

That, *Meritoria*, made me pay the Visit you requir'd ;
that brings me here, with the unthinking Tenantry,
to joy his Lordship's wonderful Recovery.

Mer. You lost nothing by the first, Mr. *Freeman* ;
since my Uncle then declar'd his Aversion to *Flyblow*.
And if I have prevail'd on you to come to this Place,
the Motive was neither from Adulation or Curiosity,
but to prosecute, and lend a helping Hand to some
Projects of your Friend *Boldman*.

Free. Let what will be the Motive to your Plea-
sure, *Meritoria*, your Pleasure is the Motive to my
Will.

Mer. You us'd to tell our Sex, Mr. *Freeman*, that
Wind and Weather are variable Things—Would
not the same be a suitable Return to your last Sen-
tence ? How long is it, since my Pleasure was not a
Motive to your Will ? However, Sir, I would no
more desire or wish my Will a Law to yours, than
yours a Law to mine. Providence has endu'd us both
with Reason, and we never better evince the Beauty
of it, than when we bring all our Actions under its
Tent. This, as we have hitherto done, let us mu-
tually continue so to do, and we shall safely set all
Censure at Defiance.

G

Free.

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Free. Thou truest Standard of all earthly Excellence ! Survey thy Value in that most exquisite Piece of Workmanship before you. (*pointing to a fine Clock*)

Mer. Which, if I mistake not, is too curious a Piece for Use—Is that your Application ?

Free. No ! lovely *Meritoria* ! do not my Sentiments so much Injury, but hear me. You see, my Fair, its Fabrick is inimitable ; its Springs, its Wheels, its every Movement, all Miracles of Art ; so compleatly set together, Nature herself seems jealous : Would not a curious Spectator, on the Survey, be apt to ask, why is the Artist's Work neglected ? why stands so fair a Model idle ; when every Sense impatient is to eulogize the finish'd Piece ?

Mer. Wait the Solution, Mr. *Freeman*, till your Friend appears ; then put the Question to him.

Free. I thank my dearest *Meritoria* ; and though I long have waited, I still resolve to wait, till she herself show Pity to my Patience. Oh ! were every Woman such ; to ask for more than One, were, sure, to prostitute both Sense and Reason, or Reason to the worst of Sense.

Mer. Then why do some think Avarice a Virtue ?

Free. If they are not Ideots, *Meritoria*, they wrong their Understandings : Or, if they do think so, it is for Want of Thought. The Weak alone are Captives to Variety : It is the single Dish, and not the *Cæna dubia*, that leads in Health and Happiness.

Enter Boldman and Jenny.

Bold. I thought we should never have got to you : There is such a Crowd of the Tenantry, to pay the Adoration of the Eyes to this foreign Mrs. *Mapp*, the Bone-setter, that we should never have got along, if it had not been for two Foreigners, who would make as good Way — Clearers, *Anglice*, Porters, as they do Pimps.

Mer.

Or, the contented CUCKOLD. 43

Mer. Are they coming here, Mr. Boldman?

Bold. They are putting into Regimental Order by the Steward of the Court, who seems resolv'd to shew Mankind that Decorum is of his Acquaintance. Rank and Quality are Things of no small Consideration.

Free. to *Jenny.* Upon my Word, Mrs. Jane, your Lady was resolv'd to shew she could kill with other Eyes than her own.—She has set you out so splendidly, that, the Ceremony over, your Spouse will have no Room to repent.

Bold. Yes, and she has her Letters of Mart about her too. Have you not, Mrs. Bride?

Free. What are those, pray?

Bold. Shall we communicate, Mrs. Jenny? I think we must: We are all of a Party, as Sir Solomon says.

Jen. As you please, Sir: You have Possession, and need not ask Leave.

Bold. There then—*(giving a Letter)*

Free. What's this? To Mrs. Jane. Who is it from?

Bold. Open and read, and save the Trouble of Questions.

Free. reads—I that could live so lovingly with my last Lady, even when I had another living, would it be doing my Reason Justice to imagine I should be less tender of you, who now stand single in my Affections? True it is, my selecting you proceeds from my Want of Health, from a vast Diarhæa of Grief and inconsolable Sorrow: But I leave it to your Consideration, how much my Recovery must consequently endear you to me. In short, I shall give Orders for a Settlement of Five Hundred Pounds a Year upon you for Life, which will render you as easy, as you are agreeable, to

Your most humble Servant,

S O L O M O N S W A G.

Mer. Good Heavens! Is it possible?

Free. I would fain advise them to set up a Stage, or a Gallows fifty Cubits high.

G 2

Mer.

Mer. Pr'ythee *Jenny*, give me an Account of this unaccountable Appearance.

Bold. Pray do: And in the mean-time, I'll go and prepare my Incidents. [Exit Boldman.]

Jen. You had but just left me, Madam, to wait for the coming of Mr. *Boldman*, when one of the Footmen came to tell me, a Gentleman wanted to speak with me from Sir *Solomon*. Your Ladyship will easily believe me surpriz'd: But my Surprize was increas'd, by his rushing into the Room before I could return an Answer. At first Sight of me, he drew back; then, making his Bow, deliver'd me that Letter; mumbling somewhat in my Ears, which to me appear'd like perfect Conjuration. I remain'd a Minute or two perfectly confounded; still in a Doubt, whether to keep it or return it: But coming to a Resolution of letting Mr. *Boldman* see it, I put it up; at which he bow'd and mumbled, and mumbled and bow'd so long, that, if my Life had lain at Stake, I could not refrain bursting into a loud Laughter. What he thought, I cannot say; but he left me in more Confusion than he had at first thrown me into; and I never saw or heard more of him. For Mr. *Boldman* entring soon after, I gave him the Letter, which he just read to me, and then brought me hither.

Mer. What say you to this, Mr. *Freeman*? Are not you Men a Parcel of fine Figures?

Free. In my Opinion, *Meritoria*, twenty such will hardly make a Cypher.—But then you had not Time, Mrs. *Jenny*, to return an Answer?

Jen. What Answer, Sir? Do you think I have liv'd so long under my dear Lady's Eye, to be under any Difficulty what Answer to return to such a Cart-load of *Billingsgate* and *Bridewell*?

Mer. Bravely said, my Girl: Give him his own.

Free. I cry Truce. Let me not smart too severely for Inadvertencies, Mrs. *Bride*?

Jen.

Or, the contented CUCKOLD. 45

Jen. Sir, I resign the Weapons into my Lady's Hands: She best knows how to use them.

Free. But if she uses them with too great Severity, I hope you'll mitigate, Mrs. Bride. I profess, mine was an involuntary Offence, a meer *Lapsus Linguae*.

Enter Boldman.

Bold. Come, Mrs. Bride; all Things are ready. But we must go down the Back-stairs: For Sir *Solomon* and his Ushers are coming up that Way (*to Freeman.*) Have you conn'd your Lesson? (*aside to Freeman.*)

Free. (*as going*) What Lesson?

Bold. (*smiling*) I shall try your Scholarship. So along. [Exeunt at one Door.]

At the other, Enter Sir Solomon, Baron Belchwell and his Lady, and Baron Scoopall.

Sir Solomon placing Lady Belchwell in a Chair of State, and the two Barons for Supporters.

Sir Sol. There, Madam, you are to receive the Homage of the Tenants. Such is the Will of Lord *Symon*.

La. Belch. O daat be ver weel—And must Ec Speech maken to 'em?

Sir Sol. Short and sweet, Lady, suitable to the Occasion. But first, as Head-Tenant, (*here Sir Solomon puts himself in an addressing Posture*) Permit me, Madam, to congratulate your auspicious Arrival here, and to return you my Thanks, for those profound Favours by you dispenc'd to our inconsolable, sick and solitary Lord: Who must infallibly have surrend'rd up to Fate, had not your vivifying Drops, and sovereign Smelling-Bottle interpos'd. O that I had another of the same! A Doctress of the like Perspicuity, Savour and Efficacy! Then would all my tristful Dolours

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Dolours exude behind, before, and all over me ; and thus refrigerated, I might hope to live to speak your Praises, and administer Comfort till your good Man's Return.

La. Belch. Me daanck you, Myn Heer, vor yur grand Farveurs, and me sal be ver ready to allay all yur grand Maladies, as far as me be able : And, as you have had a Touch or two of my Capacity, you need not doubt my Willingness to continue my diligent Labours for your Goods.

Sir Sol. (to an Officer) Did you affix the Ranks and Qualities of the Visitants, as I gave Directions ?

Of. They are all in Order, an't like your Honour.

Sir Sol. See they are admitted accordingly.—

How now ? where are the two I order'd first ? (Ex. *Of.*)

Of. An it please your Honour, they are gone Home to New-Rig.

Sir Sol. Why, what was the Matter ?

Of. A Dispute arose about Precedency, both claiming Relation to the Lady.—And so hot they were upon the Point, that they fell to pulling of Head-Cloths, and never left while either had any on.

Sir Sol. Why did not you call me to decide the Controversy ? I sure was best Judge of their Consanguinity.

Of. For that Matter, there were no great Difficulty. One only claim'd, that she had been a kept Mistress afore she marry'd, and the other after : A Thing not worth troubling your Honour about.

Sir Sol. Was that all ? Well ; let the next come in.

Enter Mrs. Gately and Officer before her.

Gate. (to the Officer going up) Mun I kiss her Hand, Officer ?

Of. We have no Orders for it To-day.

Gate. Nay then, I shall do well enough.—
Madam, Ise huge glad to see you come over ; indeed

deed now am I. My *Dick* has wanted a Commission any Time this four Year, and yet the Money has liggen by too. I fancy they could not agree among themselves who should have it. But your coming will make the Matter as plain as the Nose on one's Face: *Dick* and I'll wait on your Ladyship with the Guineas.—Ah! Blessing on your Heart! you smile already: What will you do then, when the Gold shines in your Eyes?

Sir *Sol.* Madam, Madam — You take up too many of the Lady's precious Minutes.

Gate. Very well, Sir *Solomon*: I'll take another Opportunity. [Exit.]

Sir *Sol.* This betraying of Secrets will never answer I must find some other Way (*to himself*) However, let Lady *Tattle* advance: She is right, if I am not very much in the wrong.

Enter Lady Tattle, who advances in a Coupee up to the very Chair.

La. Tat. Dear Benefactress of the Community! How transported am I to see you here? A Lady of such uncommon Extraction, such Oriental Beauties, and such undistinguishable Accomplishments, must, unavoidably, be acceptable and refrigerating to the whole Tenantry. Why, Dear Lady, under this Groupe of Embellishments, you cannot fail of flowing in an Ocean of Gold. For my Part, if I can have the Favour of but the Tip of your Ear, it will answer the utmost of my Ambition. Assure yourself, Bright Lady, whatever other Grift you may have to your Mill, it shall employ my utmost Care and Diligence to keep it a-going, as long as ever it is in a going Condition.—For Gold—

Sir *Sol.* (*whispering*) Is beyond the Purport of our present Embassy, my Lady: Therefore—

La.

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La. Tat. I go, I go, Sir *Solomon*: Tho' I could languish on the dear Subject.—(*returning in a Back-Coupee.*)

Sir Sol. This will never do: They all run a wrong Descant. But I cannot help it: Orders must be follow'd.—Let Madam *Miscellany*, the *English Scotch Lady* be next.

Enter Miscellany, and moves up.

Misc. Madam, I congratulate your Arrival in a Country not much signaliz'd for its Over-Complaisance. You will find the People in the main, squeamish even against Precedent: But take Courage, Lady, our Sex know how to subdue in all Countries and Climates. In Title, or Half-Title, at least, I may lay Claim to Relation. You see by this I am ambitious; and indeed Ambition you will find my Foible. Indulge me, Lady, with a Gratification that Way, and in bestowing Honour and Grandeur, you will devote me intirely to your Service.—It would be impertinent to be further importunate at present.

Sir Sol. Gad, if *Jenny* does not buckle: I think I must take a Tour to the Borders— (*Exit Misc.*)

Of. An it please your Honour, here is a Lady at the Door will press in, do all we can.

Sir Sol. Lady! What Lady?

Of. I heard one call her my Lady Dutches.

Sir Sol. Let her come in then. My Lady Dutches, who expected to see your Grace in this Place?

Dut. Less look'd for, less welcome, perhaps.

Sir Sol. Sure your Ladyship's Company can never be unwelcome to any Body. Did your Ladyship embrace the Grand Occasion?

Dut. Occasion me no Occasions. I have been perusing this Book.

Sir Sol. What Book is it?

Dut.

Or, the contented CUCKOLD. 49

Dut. Don't be afraid : It is neither *Bible* or *Common-prayer* : I know those are out of your Acquaintance. It is a *Book of Rates* ; and, as far as I can perceive by that, your new-imported Commodity is liable to a Seizure : At least, if not contraband, the Duty is not here rated.

Sir Sol. What Commodity does your Ladyship mean ?

Dut. That before your Eyes—How improvident a Patriot are you, to run down your own Country Manufacture ? Have we not enough in every Street, but we must put a Finger in Eye, and cry for Foreign Ware ? If you'd an Ambition to stock *Dutch-Land* with Castles, could you not learn of our Children, and with a little Soap, warm Water, and a Tobacco-Pipe, send it flying about your Ears in Clusters ? You a Statesman, and go to nose Quality with Mawkings ! Or import Foreigners to pick the Money out of your own Pockets ?

Sir Sol. O fie, my Lady : Decency, Decency —

Dut. O fie, *Sir Solomon* : Discretion, Discretion. — But you are too old to learn it now. Your last Action was enough to superannuate your Understanding : But if you go on at this Rate, the new Apartment at *Bedlam* for Incurables will hardly —

Sir Sol. Pardon me, Madam, I must not endure this : Consider the Place —

Dut. Consider the Coxcomb. I did not consider my own Quality when I threw myself into such Company. But I have spoke my Mind ; and yet I doubt not, but like bald *Baard*, you will still persist to go on in your old Way. However, take my Advice, and don't, as you us'd to do, mend Matters by making 'em worse. Good b'wye. I leave you and your Implement of Idolatry with abundance of good Wishes; but all on my Country's Side. (*Exit Dutch.*)

Sir Sol. Was there ever such a Termagant ! I must be forc'd to take a Turn to compose myself.

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(walks a Turn or two.) But hear you, Officer, I charge you at your Peril, no more such. Can't you distinguish People? Learn to know, who and who's of a Side; or I shall discharge you. Who's at the Door?

Of. Lady Springwell.

Sir Sol. O she is a Gamester: Let her come in. She will not declaim, for Fashion's-sake.—

Enter Lady Springwell, crossing herself.

So; like a Free-Mason, she enters with her Sign of Distinction.

La. Spr. With open Arms, and a hearty Welcome, Lady, I come to receive you. Dearest Lady, Inclination took Place of Orders: And I hope your Example will take Place of Precept, that the Ladies of this my Native Land may no longer hesitate, whether Duty to ourselves ought not to precede all Family-Duty. Pleasure is the great Document of Nature: And if our pious Leaders can sell us Pardons, as fast as we can stand in need, we must be Fools to go without them, if our Spouses are such Fools to supply us with Money. But at all Events, your fair Practice and Pattern, Lady, will lead us into a Way delightful, beneficial, and every Way agreeable.

La. Belch. You be ver good, and me daanck you. I been true Catholick. *Exit La. Springwell.*

Sir Sol. Who's next Officer? For it behoves me to be cautious.

Of. Lady Smartly, an it please your Honour.

Sir Sol. It does please me very well: I am sure she can make no Reflections—with Justice.

Enter Lady Smartly.

La. Sm. I rejoice, Lady, at your Success. Though I wish your own Sex had employ'd your Charity a little,

little. I am satisfy'd, we stand in need of it; and a Cure on our Parts would be every Whit as welcome, and as acceptable. For my Part, mine is a Case truly calamitous. An Officer of the Guards, like a great ugly Dog as he was, had often presented himself before my Eyes; and, being in the Humour, about a Fortnight ago, I admitted him. But he has left such a Memento of his Mortality, as I don't know when I shall get rid of. But, you, Lady, if you can keep clear of that Sort of Covetousness, are in no Danger. Alas! one does not know who to trust in this World. The Hale are not wholesome, however toothsome they may be. I wish your Charity would be reciprocal; and as your Baron has done you the Favour to lend you, that you would do me the Favour to lend me your Baron. It might go a great Way towards stopping publick Clamours: But I am positive it would stop mine, Lady.

Sir Sol. Away, away; what Stuff—

La. Sm. Stuff, do you call it? What did you send for me for, if I am not to speak my Mind? I have congratulated her; and is there any Harm in wishing she would congratulate me? I think not. (*Exit.*)

Sir Sol. I wish the next may be a better: This was a bitter one. But Quality still—

Enter *Lady Bitewell.*

O, Lady *Bitewell*—Another good one, though of the demurer Sort.

La. *Bite.* Just as Virtue was lost in the Land of my Nativity, what a Pleasure must it be to my Heart to see such a Recruit from Foreign Parts?—Men shall no more dare now to vent their idle Lampoons and execrable Libels against the Fair Sex. Your Bright Eyes will stop Asperion, and put to Silence Calumny and Detraction. May you live the Patroness of—What shall I say? — Virtue, Justice

52 *The INCONSOLEABLES:*

Chastity and Modesty.—And then let *France* despair of giving future Models.—Your fair Example will furnish out a Model to them all.

Enter Officer in Haste.

Qf. An it please your Honour, here is a Messenger brings Word, my Lord is taken with a sudden Palpitation, and has sent for the Lady Doctress.—

Sir Sol. How! Go, go, Madam. Baron, do your Duty, and hand the Lady.

B. Belch. Yaw—Come mine Dear: I's haben you to mine ver good Lord. — (Ex. all but *Baron Scoopall and Sir Solomon, who come forward.*)

Sir Sol. You see, my dear Baron, what Pains I have taken to prepare a good Reception of Things. I hope you have been as successful in my Affairs.

B. Scoop. Mine Brooder told a me, he had given a yur Letter to de Lady, and dat she received a it wid a *graat Smile.* Dat vas all he spaken.

Sir Sol. Then he thought it would do; did he?

B. Scoop. Undubitablement. But a you was speaking about de grand Affair of Perquisits, or Procuration Money: Vat sal it be ordered? — Sal all go through de Lady's Fingers, or how?

Sir Sol. For my Part, all that know me, know that I am modest. The easiest contented of any Man in the Universe. A little satisfies a Man that is not covetous. If I improve, it is for others; therefore, Baron, whatever the Lady, and You, deem adequate—

B. Scoop. Hah. Vat be adequate? — It be no good *Duyths.*

Sir Sol. Adequate is as much as to say, fitting, proper, convenient—

B. Scoop. Ho, ho; me forestand ye now. Dat is vat we please,

Sir

Or, the contented CUCKOLD. 53

Sir Sol. Right, Baron, right: Just my Meaning:
For I desire to be no Carver of my own——

B. Scoop. Ver well——Den we sal no differ——

Sir Sol. However, it is good to settle Prelimina-
ries. Disputes among Friends are intolerable.

B. Scoop. Ver tru, indeed. De Dispute be no good.

Enter Flyblow, and Jenny masqu'd.

Fly. No, no; by no means: Take not the Masque
off, till I give the Word of Command. I'll banter
the old Toast. — Servant, Sir Solomon; Servant,
Baron! Well, how goes the World?

Sir Sol. You're come too late, 'Squire: The Lady
is gone——

Fly. You mistake, Knight: The Lady is here.

Sir Sol. Lady! What Lady?

Fly. My Lady: What Lady should it be?

Sir Sol. Why, are you marry'd?

Fly. As sure as you are alive; and this is my
Bright One.

Sir Sol. Pray, who is she?

Fly. Now, now, unmasque: Show your Face, and
dumb-found him at once.

Jen. I shall always be obedient.

Fly. Zooks! what have I got here? Jenny? Is it
not a Mistake, Child?

Jen. Not on my Side, that I know of.

Fly. 'Sblud, I'll know the Truth though of Bold-
man. (Exit.

Sir Sol. And haft thou play'd me that Trick?

Jen. Pardon me, Sir; I always took it, that there
was a great Difference——Difference! No Compa-
rison, between an honest Woman and a——

Sir Sol. Pshaw, pshaw: Away with all your paw
Words. Does not the Song say, *Every Woman is
the same?*

Jen.

54 *The INCONSOLEABLES:*

Jen. But Poets now a-days are so far from being Prophets, that like Knights, they are hardly Christians.—

B. Scoop. Vat is de Matter, Lady? Vat is de Matter?

Sir Sol. She is marry'd.

B. Scoop. So much de beater: She will answer your Purpose much a better.

Sir Sol. How so?

B. Scoop. Can she no be his Wife, and your Mistress?

Jen. No more than you can be a *German* Baron and an honest Man.

Sir Sol. But *Jenny*—

Jen. But, Sir *Solomon*—Here comes my Husband: When you have ask'd his Consent, it will be Time enough to ask mine, and go without it.—

Mr. Flyblow, Sir *Solomon* has an humble Request to make to you.

Fly. I suppose to the same Tenour with this (*bewewing Sir Solomon's Letter.*)

Jen. Indeed, my Dear, you're a Witch.

Fly. What Answer did you give?

Jen. That when he had got yours, he should never have mine.

Fly. My charming Dear, hold thee there; and by this and this (*kissing her*) I'll make thee a loving Husband.

Jen. Use me well till I deceive you; and you shall never have Occasion to send for Foreign Ware.

Fly. *Boldman* put this Letter into my Hand, and bad me go and take Poffession of my Premises. I read it over, Knight, and 'tis a Hummer.—Gad, I'll give some Six-penny Poet a Shilling to verify it, and have it fung about the Streets of *London*. Is this your Inconsolability?

Sir Sol. Do; and I'll find a Jury, and a Special One too, that shall make a Libel of it. And then—

But

Or, the contented CUCKOLD. 55

But hear you, 'Squire : One Word with you—
Let me have *Jenny*, and you shall have my Niece.

Fly. You'll fly from your Word, if I should accept your Offer—*aside* (which I know I cannot).

Sir Sol. I'll give it you under my Hand.

Fly. Come in, come in— Black and White is best—(*whispering to Jenny*) Pr'ythee stay here a-bit. Allons.

B. Scoop. Ver be dey gon, Lady?

Jen. About some Roguery, I suppose : However, I'll stay here till my Guardian comes.

B. Scoop. De Knight will make de Bargain wid de 'Squire.

Jen. You mistake : Bargains are not so soon made on this Side the Herring-Pond. The Woman's Consent here is a necessary Ingredient : We never allow of the Man's, even in Cuckoldom.

B. Scoop. Vat Cuckold?

Jen. Ask your Brother, the Baron : I answer no such Questions.

B. Scoop. But vil a yaw no cure de Knight? He be ver dangerously bad.—

Enter Boldman.

Jen. Indeed I doubt so ; then worse must mend him : But I am glad my Guardian is come.

Bold. So Mrs. Bride. Where's the Bridegroom?

Jen. Gone with Sir Solomon.

Bold. What to do, I wonder?

Jen. I guess, but dare not tell. They went away in close Consult. But I dare trust him—

Bold. So dare not I : The Odds are too great—I'll go search 'em out—

Jen. You need not ; they are here. I wish you could be invisible for a-while : I dare say the Pleasure would repay the Pains.

Bold.

56 The INCONSOLEABLES:

Bold. If you think so, why should not that Door conceal me?

Jen. Can you recover it? He has dexterously.

[*Bold.* slips behind the *Door*, as *Sir Sol.* and *Fly* enter]

Fly. Over, and beside this Note, you are to give me your Bond of Indemnification.

Sir Sol. I am——

Fly. Well then, I think there remains no more than to impart the Agreement to my Spouse: You are sure *Meritoria* will stand to't?

Sir Sol. Let me see her refuse, if she dare.

Fly. Mrs. *Jenny*, Sir *Solomon* and I have struck a Bargain——By this Note in my Hand, he obliges himself to deliver into my Possession, his Niece, *Meritoria*, upon my quitting all Claim to you. What say you to it?—— (Jenny stands sullenly.)

Sir Sol. I will use you very kindly, *Jenny*; notwithstanding what is past.

Fly. There can be no Doubt of that: Sir *Solomon* always was a loving Tit, (*aside*) except in his first Wife's Days.

Sir Sol. Come, Mrs. *Jenny*, speak: What do you say?

Jen. (bursting into Tears) That I could not have thought there could have been such Barbarity among Men! Monstrous Creatures!

Fly. Dearest, dearest Rogue: I have try'd thee; and would not part with thee now for Crowns and Scepters.

Sir Sol. How's this?

Bold. What's the Matter here? What's here to do?
(coming forward)

Sir Sol. He here too! Nay then——(going)

Bold. A Word or two before you go, if you please, Sir *Solomon*.

Sir Sol. Will you stop me by Force?

Bold. Far from it: But if I can offer a Word or two of Consolation.

Sir

Or, the contented CUCKOLD. 57

Sir Sol. You are not in Earnest, I doubt.

Bold. Why should you distrust me? If I take the Matter right, 'tis but a Trifle. Mr. Flyblow, pray let me peruse the Contract.

Jen. Dear Sir, tear it to Pieces.

Bold. Away, away; you don't know what's for your own Good.—Sir Solomon, that famous Machiavel in Amour—And here comes Meritoria to give her Consent. Have Patience, all Things will go in a direct Line, I warrant you.

Sir Sol. I doubt it much—

Enter Meritoria and Freeman.

Bold. Opportunely encounter'd, Lady,

Mer. How so, I beseech you?

Bold. (whispers) Are you marry'd? If not, I'll give you up to your Uncle—

Mer. Such a Word before, and I'd have ventur'd. But you know how to Bully safely—(aside)

Bold. That's well; I understand you.—Here's Sir Solomon, Lady, your kind and dear Uncle, full of your Good and future Benefit, has pass'd his Note upon you for a Trifle—

Mer. His Note upon me!

Bold. Upon you, or for you; 'tis all one in the Greek: Is it not?

Mer. I cannot apprehend you, Mr. Boldman.

Bold. Read that Note; or give it Mr. Freeman; he may—

Sir Sol. How, Sir! Is that your Friendship?

Bold. Hush, Sir Solomon: Hear what he says to the Busines.

Free. First to you, Sir; (to Flyblow) Do you claim your Bargain?

Fly. This Bargain I do, Sir; and will never resign it, but with my Life. (taking Jenny by the Hand)

Free. Then what's the Meaning of this Note?

58 *The INCONSOLEABLES:*

Fly. On my Side, only to try my *Jenny's* Affection ;
and to feel the Pulse of yours for *Meritoria*.

Bold. A Plotter, a Plotter——

Fly. As to Sir *Solomon's* Design, I think it will
need no great Conjuration to explain it : Only one
Thing I will beg of him, that he will not any longer
delude himself with the Hopes of getting my dear
Jenny out of my Hands. I am a true *English-*
man, and no *German* ; neither will I be wheedled or
bully'd out of my Wife. What says my Dear One ?

Jen. There, Sir, stands my Hostage. Under that
dear Lady's Eye had I all my Education and Pa-
tern ; and for her Honour, as well as my own, I will
always make it my Study to discharge the Part of a
virtuous obedient Wife.

Mer. I thank you, Mrs. Bride.

Jen. May not I give Mrs. Bride my Thanks again ?

Mer. I accept 'em, my Dear.

Sir Sol. How's this ?

Free. Even so, Sir.

Sir Sol. And not ask my Consent ?

Free. I examin'd the Writings, Sir ; and found it
not incumbent upon me so to do.

Sir Sol. Pray how got you at the Writings ?

Free. You left them in the Hands of your Attorney
in *Clifford's-Inn* ; and on dispatch of an Embassy of
twenty Embassadors in Yellow, I not only had a
Perusal, but authentick Copies.

Sir Sol. But her Fortune is in my Hand.

Free. I am glad to hear it.

Sir Sol. Why, how will you get it out ?

Free. That is a Question I did not expect to hear
from an *Englishman*.

Sir Sol. Why, will you go to Law for it ?

Free. Ay, with the King himself (God bless him)
if he would not pay it without, and think myself
never the worse Subject neither.

Sir

Or, the contented CUCKOLD. 39

Sir Sol. And what say you to all this, Niece? Is it not somewhat barbarous Usage?

Mer. Really, dear Uncle, Times are so fickle and varying, that considering my Fortune, and your Inability to attend even your own Affairs, I thought it behoved me to settle mine. And because I was a Novice myself, and this Gentleman had the Fame of a good Accomptant, I have appointed him my Head Steward; and I have no Apprehension but he will manage Matters to the best Advantage. What say you, Sir?

Free. You have left me nothing to say, my Dearest: Actions now must be my constant Study. And sure a finer Field never was before Man. I am in no Danger of being brib'd, because there's nothing on Earth to bribe me with. Ambition, Wealth, and Pleasure are in a lambent Calm: Their own Fullness affords a System of Contemplation so compleat, they leave no Vacancy for Wish or Hope. And yet—

Sir Sol. What yet?

Free. One Thing is wanting.

Sir Sol. What one Thing?

Free. Your own good Humour, Sir *Solomon*.

Sir Sol. How? Nay then, dear Niece, I wish you Joy: And you, Mr. *Freeman*, much and long.

Free. and *Mer.* We return you, Sir, sincere and hearty Thanks.

Sir Sol. Come, Baron, we'll leave them to their Mirth: For I am full. [*Ex. Sir Solomon and Baron.*]

Fly. Ay, ay, I had rather he should be full than Somebody else.

Bold. Now they have left us; pray let us recollect ourselves; and begin the Duties their trifling Embarrassments had made us neglect. To you first, Lady, and my dear Friend, I wish the Joys in Prospect establish'd, and that's to the very Borders o' a Surfet. To you, my pretty modest *Jenny*, an

The INCONSOLEABLES

my now friendly Squire, I wish Joys to the Height
of your Wishes.

Fly. I vow now, my Dearest, it went to my very
Heart to try thee as I did: And when thy Tears
ran from thee, I had much to do to keep myself
from being all over Tears.

Jen. If that be the greatest Tryal, Mr. Flylow—

Fly. Pshaw, pshaw: Call me My Dear, as you
should do, or I'll not take it kindly.

Enter Officer.

Of. I am order'd to tell the Company, the Foreign
Lady will sit no more this Day.

Fly. And thou may'st tell the Foreign Lady, an
if thou woul'st, that I care not whether ever she sits
again or no: For I have got a Lady of my own,
and, which is better, no Foreigner.

Of. You don't mean an Affront, I hope.

Fly. Not I—For I said nothing but Truth, and
that should not affront.

Bald. Well; where shall we go? To your House,
Freeman, or to Sir Solomon's?

Free. Sir Solomon forgot to invite us. But what
says my fair Commandrefs?

Mer. I am for any Thing, bat too much Ceremony.

Fly. Let me put in a Word—Look ye, being
fully persuaded of what has happen'd, I had order'd
a Wedding-Dinner. You'll have every Thing rea-
dy by Day, and Beds at Night.

Bald. Agreed; agreed. Move on.

Vice always inconsolable will prove:

But *Virtue* her ProteCTOR owns above;

And still rewarded is with happy Love.

The E N D.



The INCONSOLEABLES.

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